

Adding Clauses

To add variety and detail to your writing, add clauses to your sentences. A **clause** is a group of words that has a subject and a predicate and is used as part of a sentence. A clause that can stand alone as a sentence is called a **main clause**. A clause that cannot stand alone is called a **subordinate clause**. For stylistic effect, you can sometimes add a subordinate clause at various points in a sentence. Study the following examples:

- Today, **because I didn't feel well**, I couldn't go to school.
- My best friend, Monica, **because she didn't feel well**, couldn't go to school either.
- Our teachers must have been curious, **because neither of us has missed a single class before today**.

The groups of words in bold are all subordinate clauses. Notice that these subordinate clauses, while relevant, are not needed to make the meaning of the sentences clear. That is, these subordinate clauses are **nonessential**. When adding a nonessential clause to a sentence, you need to set the clause off with commas.

EXERCISE Each item below begins with a sentence model from literature that has a subordinate clause. Rearrange the bulleted sentence parts to create a new sentence that matches the structure of the literature model. Add commas where necessary.

Sample Then, as he stepped forward, his foot sank into the ooze.

Richard Connell, "The Most Dangerous Game"

- scientists may find cures for many inherited diseases
- soon
- if gene therapy continues to enjoy success

Revision *Soon, if gene therapy continues to enjoy success, scientists may find cures for many inherited diseases.*

1. That spring, when I discovered the lone horned toad near the back of the lot, had been rough on my family.

Gerald Haslam, "The Horned Toad"

- Jackie Robinson
- became the first African American to play major-league baseball
- who joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947

2. The skies, which dawned a clear, blazing blue, have grayed.

Jane Ellen Stevens, "Exploring Antarctic Ice"

- entered World War I as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross
- Ernest Hemingway
- who was rejected for military service several times

Revising with Style

LESSON

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Continued

3. After that their manner changed a little toward me, although I was their friend against outsiders.

Ernest Hemingway, "In Another Country"

- even though the number of hours spent surfing the Web has also risen
 - the number of books sold each year has risen
 - since 1991
-
-

4. She wore her coarse, straight hair, which was slightly streaked with gray, in a long braided rope across the top of her head.

Maya Angelou, "Living Well. Living Good."

- which is spoken in both Portugal and Brazil
 - Fernando speaks Portuguese
 - with the distinctive accent of a Brazilian
-
-

5. Nevertheless, as I made the raft, the tears ran out of my eyes.

Stephen Vincent Benét, "By the Waters of Babylon"

- you should wear supportive shoes
 - when you jog
 - needless to say
-
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6. Once a boy, whose name was Richard, drowned in the river.

James Baldwin, "The Rockpile"

- which use automated photo technology
 - new traffic control systems
 - may help to discourage drivers from running red lights
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